State Route 74
Lower Ortega Highway Widening

ORANGE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
DISTRICT 12 – ORA – 74, (KP 1.7/3.0) PM 1.0/1.9
EA 086900

Initial Study (with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration)

Prepared by the

State of California Department of Transportation

July 2007

General Information About the Document

What Is In This Document

The Department of Transportation (Department) has prepared this Initial Study (IS), which examines the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project − widening of State Route 74 (SR-74) from two lanes to four lanes from Calle Entradero to the City of San Juan Capistrano/County of Orange limits − located in the City of San Juan Capistrano, Orange County, California. The document describes: why the project is being proposed; alternatives for the project; the existing environment that could be affected by the project; the potential impacts from each of the alternatives; and the proposed avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures.

What You Should Do

- Please read this Initial Study. Copies of this document as well as the technical studies are available for review at:

  Caltrans District 12
  3337 Michelson Drive, Suite 100
  Irvine, California 92612
  http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist12/pdf_previews/74_widening_project.pdf

  City of San Juan Capistrano
  Planning Services Department
  32400 Paseo Adelanto
  San Juan Capistrano, California 92675

  San Juan Capistrano Regional Library
  31495 El Camino Real
  San Juan Capistrano, California 92675

- Attend the public meeting.

  Tuesday, July 24, 2007
  6 PM to 8 PM
  Marco F. Forster Middle School
  25601 Camino Del Avion
  San Juan Capistrano CA 92675

- We welcome your comments. If you have any comments regarding the proposed project, please attend the public meeting and/or send your written comments to the Department by the deadline.

- Submit comments via postal mail to:

  Department of Transportation
  Environmental Planning
  Smita Deshpande, Environmental Branch Chief
  Attention: Iffat Qamar
  3337 Michelson Drive, #380
  Irvine, California 92612

- Submit comments via email to: lower74_D12@dot.ca.gov

- Submit comments by the deadline: August 9, 2007

What Happens Next

After comments are received from the public and reviewing agencies, the Department may: 1) give environmental approval to the proposed project; 2) undertake additional environmental studies; or (3) abandon the project. If the project is given environmental approval and funding is appropriated, the Department could design and construct all or part of the project.

For individuals with sensory disabilities, this document can be made available in Braille, large print, on audiocassette, or on computer disk. To obtain a copy in one of these alternate formats, please write to Department of Transportation, Attn: Iffat Oamar, Environmental Planning, 3337 Michelson Dr. #380, Irvine, California 92612; call Dana Privitt at 714-444-9199, or use the California Relay Service TTY number, 800-735-2886.

SCH#_____
12-ORA-74- PM 1.0/1.9
(KP 1.7/3.0)
EA 086900

State Route 74 Lower Ortega Highway Widening

Caltrans is proposing to widen State Route 74 from two lanes to four lanes from Calle Entradero (PM 1.0) to the City/County limits (PM 1.9)

INITIAL STUDY (with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration)

Submitted Pursuant to: (State) Division 13, California Public Resources Code

THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Department of Transportation

7-7-07
Date of Approval

Cindy Quon
District Director
California Department of Transportation
District 12

PROPOSED MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

Pursuant to: Division 13, Public Resources Code

Project Description

The California Department of Transportation (the Department) proposes to widen State Route 74 (SR-74) from two lanes to four through lanes from Calle Entradero [Kilopost (KP) 1.7/Postmile (PM) 1.0] in the City of San Juan Capistrano (City) to the City /Orange County line (KP 3.0/PM 1.9). The existing SR-74 alignment consists of four through lanes from Interstate 5 (I-5) to approximately 330 feet (ft.) [100 meters (m)] east of Calle Entradero where it transitions to two through lanes.

The project is needed in this area for the following reasons:

- To relieve traffic congestion and improve the flow of traffic on SR-74.
- To accommodate planned growth and development in the surrounding areas.
- To provide improvements consistent with local planning documents.

Determination

This proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) is included to give notice to interested agencies and the public that it is the Department's intent to adopt an MND for this project. This does not mean that the Department's decision regarding the project is final. This MND is subject to modification based on comments received by interested agencies and the public.

The Department has prepared an Initial Study for this project and, pending public review, expects to determine from this Initial Study that the proposed project would not have a significant effect on the environment for the following reasons:

- The proposed project would have no affect on coastal resources, environmental justice, farmlands/timberlands, hazardous waste/materials, growth, hydrology and floodplain, land use, and mineral resources.

- In addition, with mitigation implementation, the proposed project would have no significant adverse effects on aesthetics, air quality, biological resources, community resources, cultural resources, geology/soils, water quality, noise, public services, and transportation/traffic because the recommended mitigation measures would reduce potential effects to less than significant levels.

_____ _____

Cindy Quon Date
District Director
California Department of Transportation, District 12

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List of Documents Bound Separately

SR-74 (Ortega Highway) Widening Project Traffic Study	November 2006
SR-74 (Ortega Highway) Widening Project Traffic Study	June 2006, revised June 2007
Visual Impact Assessment	December 2006
Historic Property Survey Report*	January 2007
Hydrology Study	August 2006
Water Quality Technical Study	November 2006
Preliminary Geotechnical Report	August 2006
Paleontology Report	December 2006
Air Quality Assessment Report	November 2006
Final Technical Noise Impact Analysis*	November 2004, revised June 2007
Natural Environment Study*	January 2007
Initial Site Assessment*	May 2000, updated April 2003 and April 2007

* Individually Bound Studies

List of Abbreviated Terms

AC	Asphalt Concrete
ACHP	Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
ACOE	Army Corps of Engineers
ADT	Average Daily Traffic
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ADL	Aerially Deposited Lead
ADT	Average Daily Trips
APE	Area of Potential Effects
APEFZA	Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act
AQMP	Air Quality Management Plan
ARPA	Archaeological Resources Protection Act
ASR	Archaeological Survey Report
BA	Biological Assessment
BCM	Backcountry Motorized
BMP	Best Management Practices
BRCP	Biological Resources Construction Plan
BSA	Biological Study Area
CAA	Clean Air Act
CAAQS	California Ambient Air Quality Standards
CARB	California Air Resources Board
CBCWD	Chino Basin Conservation Water District
CBSP	Commuters Bikeways Strategic Plan
CCAA	California Clean Air Act
CDFG	California Department of Fish and Game
CDR	Center for Demographic Research
CEDD	California Employment Development Department
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation & Liability Act
CERFA	Community Environmental Response Facilitation Act
CESA	California Endangered Species Act
CET	Community Enhancement Team
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CHP	California Highway Patrol
CLG	Certified Local Government
CMP	Corrugated Metal Pipe
CNPS	California Native Plant Society
CO	Carbon Monoxide
COG	Council of Governments
CPHI	California Points of Historical Interest
CRHR	California Register of Historical Resources
CSP	Corrugated Steel Pipe
CSUF	California State University, Fullerton
CT	Census Tract
CUSD	Capistrano Unified School District
CVAG	Coachella Valley Association of Governments
CWA	Clean Water Act

DAI	Developed Area Intermix
dBA	Decibels
DED	Draft Environmental Document
Department	California Department of Transportation
DHHS	Department of Health and Human Services
DOA	Department of Agriculture
DOT	Department of Transportation
DS	Drainage Systems
EA	Environmental Assessment
ED	Environmental Document
EIR	Environmental Impact Report
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ERDC	Engineer Research Development Center
ESA	Environmentally Sensitive Area
FAP	Federal Aid Primary
FED	Final Environmental Document
FEIR	Final Environmental Impact Report
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Act
FESA	Federal Endangered Species Act
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FIFRA	Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act
FMP	Cleveland National Forest and Resource Management Plan
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
FSTIP	Federal Statewide Transportation Improvement Program
Ft	Feet, foot
FTIP	Federal Transportation Improvement Program
FY	Fiscal Year
GERA	Gobernadora Ecological Reserve Area
GMP	Growth Management Plan
GSRD	Gross Solids Removal Device
HCM	Highway Capacity Manual
HCP	Habitat Conservation Plan
HINS	Highway and Industrial Noise Solutions
HOV	High Occupancy Vehicle
HPSR	Historic Property Survey Report
HRER	Historical Resource Evaluation Report
I-5	Interstate 5
I-15	Interstate 15
IA	Implementation Agreement
ICHL	Capistrano Inventory of Cultural and Historical Landmarks
ICU	Intersection Capacity Utilization
IIP	Inter-regional Improvement Program
IS	Initial Study
ISA	Initial Site Assessment
ITIP	Interregional Transportation Improvement Plan
ITP	Incidental Take Permit
ITS	Institute of Transportation Studies
km	Kilometer(s)
Km/h	kilometers per hour
KP	Kilometer Post
LOP	Letters of Permission

LOS	Level of Service
M	meter(s)
MCE	Maximum Credible Earthquake
MEP	Maximum Extent Practical
MLD	Most Likely Descendent
MOE	Measures of Effectiveness
MPAH	Master Plan of Arterial Highways
Mph	Miles per hour
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
MSAA	Master Streambed Alteration Agreement
MUTCD	Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NAC	Noise Abatement Criteria
NAHC	Native American Heritage Commission
NCCP	Natural Community Conservation Plan
ND	Negative Declaration
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NES	Natural Environment Study
NHPA	National Historical Preservation Act
NMFS	National Marine Fisheries Service
NO_2	Nitrogen Dioxide
NOC	Notification of Construction
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NRC	Noise Reduction Coefficient
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
O_3	Ozone
OCFCD	Orange County Flood Control District
OCP	Orange County Projections
OCTA	Orange County Transportation Authority
OEPEAD	Office of Environmental Policy and Environmental Analysis Division
OHWM	Ordinary High Water Mark
OSHA	Occupational Safety & Health Act
PA	Planning Area
PA	Programmatic Agreement
Pb	Lead
PDT	Project Development Team
PM	Post Mile
PM	Particulate Matter
PRC	Public Resources Code
PS&E	Plans Specifications & Estimates
PSR	Project Study Report
RCP	Reinforced Concrete Pipe
RCPG	Regional Comprehensive Plan and Guide
RCRA	the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
RE	Resident Engineer
REP	Revegetation/ Enhancement Plan
RMV	Rancho Mission Viejo
ROW	Right of Way
RPTM	Ranch Plan Traffic Model
RTA	Riverside Transit Agency

RTP	Regional Transportation Plan
RTPA	Regional Transportation Planning Agency
RTIP	Regional Transportation Improvement Program
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board
SAMP	Special Area Management Plan
SCAB	South Coast Air Board
SCAG	Southern California Association of Governments
SCAQMD	South Coast Air Quality Management District
SCCIC	South Central Coastal Information Center
SCH	State Clearinghouse
SCRIP	South County Roadway Improvement Program
SCSAM	South Orange County Sub-Area Model
SHOPP	State Highway Operations Protection Program
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Officer
SHPSR	Supplemental Historic Property Survey Report
SIP	State Implementation Plan
SJC	San Juan Capistrano
SMWD	Santa Margarita Water District
SO_2	Sulfur Dioxide
SOCTIIP	South Orange County Transportation Infrastructure Improvement Project
SR	State Route
SSP	Standard Special Provisions
STA	Station
STIP	State Transportation Improvement Program
STIP	State Transportation Improvement Program/InterRegional Improvement Program
SWMP	Storm Water Management Plan
SWPPP	Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan
SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board
TASAS	Traffic Accident Surveillance and Analysis System
TCE	Temporary Construction Easements
TMP	Traffic Management Plan
TSCA	Toxic Substances Control Act
TSM	Transportation System Management
US	United States
USACOE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
USC	United States Code
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
USFS	United States Forest Service
USGS	United States Geological Survey
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
UTCD	Unified Traffic Control Devices
VA	Value Analysis
V/C	Vehicle/Capacity
WoUS	Waters of the United States
WRCOG	Western Riverside Council of Governments
WPCP	Water Pollution Control Program